

Appendix H

Yard Signs

Yard signs are a key tool for any anti-speeding program. They:

- Alert drivers to the fact that they have entered a residential area.
- Remind drivers to slow down.
- Tell drivers that neighbors care about their street.
- Signal that neighbors (perhaps many neighbors) are watching the street.

1. Visibility

Here's the thing about yard signs: Like most other signs, they tend to become "invisible" in a short period of time. That doesn't mean you should not use them, because they can definitely be effective. It just means that it's important to change out signs and locations on a regular basis, so drivers are more likely to notice them. For this reason, a variety of signs and sign locations may be just as important as the number of signs you place.

2. Homemade Signs

The most effective signs are often the ones that a neighborhood creates on its own.

- Signs, lettering and artwork should be large enough to be read and interpreted easily by passing motorists. Don't distract drivers with signs that are too complicated, requiring more "eye time" on the sign and less attention on the road ahead.
- Create positive and diplomatic messages. "Slow Down, You Jerk" will NOT result in a reduction in speeding. "Slow Down / Enjoy the Ride" is more effective.
- Art created by young people – children and teens – can be extremely effective. Involve them in the process.
- For both children and adults, it may be best to design and draw a sign on scratch paper first, then draw it again on more expensive materials like the corrugated plastic signs.
- Blank corrugated plastic yard signs may be available from the Office of Neighborhoods or from a commercial sign shop. There are plenty of online yard sign outlets as well.
- Here are some tips on other sign-making materials:
 - Sharpie Chisel Tip markers work well on the plastic signs, according to tests conducted by the City's Arts and Fine Crafts Center, and the ink appears to be waterproof.

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- If you can find large letter stencils, spray paint could work, but be cautious to not do this inside and not around children.
- Poster board and foam core board will not weather well, but Krylon Clear Coat could provide some protection, if used. Be cautious to not use this spray inside and not around children.
- Use poster board or banner paper to draw sign drafts before drawing on a plastic sign. A 500-foot role of banner paper can be purchased at craft stores for about \$10.
- Can't afford these materials?
 - See if neighbors can chip in to cover at least some of the costs.
 - Local businesses might jump at the chance to sponsor your activity.
 - Ask your City Council member about [Community Improvement \(202\) Funds](#).
 - Ask the Office of Neighborhoods for advice and information on Neighborhood Small Grants Program

3. Burma-Shave Style Home-Made Signs

For those born after 1960, this may be your first introduction to Burma-Shave advertising along roadsides well before the interstate highway system was developed. It was an extremely effective and very well-known ad campaign that deployed single-line signs spaced about 100 feet apart along major state and U.S. routes.

See this overview on Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burma-Shave>

See <http://www.fiftiesweb.com/burma1.htm> for a list of all the jingles used. Each line was a separate sign.

Perhaps this will inspire your neighbors to come up with jingles that will make an impression on drivers in your community.

4. Ready-Made Signs

There are at least three sources of ready-made anti-speeding yard signs, varying in price.

Slow Down in K-Town: The Office of Neighborhoods can provide your neighborhood with yard signs with the “Slow Down in K-Town” slogan featuring K-T the sloth. Check with them regarding availability and cost.

Drive Like Your Kids Live Here: This sign, already popular in several Knoxville neighborhoods, is trademarked and cannot be reproduced. But they can be purchased online at www.drivelikeyourkidslivehere.com or from retailers such as Home Depot, Lowes, Ace Hardware, and True Value Hardware. Check with the retail outlets for availability and price.

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Keep Kids Alive, Drive 25: Also trademarked, these signs apparently are not available from retail stores but can be purchased directly from www.keepkidsalivedrive25.com. Unless ordered in bundles, they are \$30 each.

5. Location

Be very careful about where you place your signs, because the City will remove and discard, without notice, signs located in the public right-of-way and in areas mowed and maintained by the City. This includes intersections and triangles where it may be tempting to place an anti-speeding sign.

- To avoid any problem, place the sign in your own yard, on the house side of the sidewalk, utility poles, and other city-maintained areas or structures.
- If you have a sidewalk, do not place signs between the sidewalk and curb.
- Do not place signs on utility poles.
- If in doubt, contact Chad Weth, the City's Public Service Director, at 215-2060 or call City Services at 311 or 865-215-4311.

Be strategic about where you place your signs. With the above restrictions in mind:

- Pick locations that will be seen by drivers entering or exiting the neighborhood and on neighborhood streets with the most traffic and the most speeding.
- Choose locations that will not interfere with “sight distance” — so that the signs will not block drivers' views of oncoming traffic at intersections, on curves and at the end of driveways. Just to be sure, drive past the signs after you've placed them.
- Select yards whose residents or property owners have given their permission and, better yet, are willing to remove the signs and put them back up on a regular basis. For example, one property owner might put her sign out during the first and third weeks of the month, while a resident three doors away posts his sign on the second and fourth weeks.
- Do not create any type of permanent sign without applying for a permit from the Plans Review & Zoning Department.
- Confine your signs to private property whose owners have given permission.

6. Staking Signs

There are various ways to secure or stake signs in the ground, including:

- Corrugated plastic yard signs usually come with an H-shaped wire anchor. Such anchors are easy to come by immediately following elections; just ask anyone who recently ran for public office! These anchors may also be available at hardware stores and possibly from the Office of Neighborhoods.

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- Homemade signs can be stapled or nailed to a wooden stake.
- Secure signs with a cut-out figure who holds the sign, such as this [“safety kid”](#) from an anti-speeding website. A neighbor handy with a skill saw could make similar figures with plywood and 2x4 lumber.
However, sight distance becomes even more important with such yard-art figures. Make doubly sure you are not blocking driver views of the road and oncoming traffic!

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